

New Hampshire Special Education Program Approval Report

SAU 46

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Final Report

June 28, 2000

Visit Conducted on:

April 5-6, 2000

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Table of Contents

- I. Introduction**
- II. Status of Corrective Actions from Previous Program Approval Visit**
- III. Issues of Significance**
- IV. Citations to the New Hampshire Standards for the Education of Students with Disabilities**

(Commendations, Citations and Suggestions for each school)

Note: *It should be noted that suggestions are not considered corrective actions and therefore are given as technical assistance. The district is not mandated to implement them.*

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I. INTRODUCTION:

A New Hampshire Department of Education Special Education Program Approval visit was conducted at SAU 46 comprised of the following schools: Andover Elem./Middle School, Belmont Elem. School, Belmont Middle School, Belmont High School, Boscawen Elem. School, Canterbury Elem. School, Loudon Elem. School, Merrimack Valley Middle School, Merrimack Valley High School, Salisbury Elem. School, Washington St. School and Webster Elem. School. The visiting team met on April 5-6,00 in order to review the status of special education services being provided to eligible students.

Activities related to this evaluation included the close review of all the teaching certifications of special education staff, analysis of SPEDIS data and random inspection of student records. Interviews were held with the Special Education Director, building principals, regular and special education teachers, related service personnel and administrators as time and availability permitted. In addition, the team conducted parent interviews via telephone. Throughout the visit, the team had full cooperation from the school personnel and this helpfulness was greatly appreciated.

The report that you are about to read represents the consensus of all the members of the visiting team. Please keep in mind that this is a "report for exception", meaning that only exceptions to the NH State Standards have been addressed. If a component is not mentioned, that does not mean that the team did not review it; it just means that there were no citations of noncompliance to the Standards found in that particular area.

II. STATUS OF PREVIOUS ON-SITE: *Conducted on February 14-15,1995.*

Based on a review of the previous on-site report and a corrective action visit conducted by Jane Bergeron, SERESC on May 20,1996 it is evident that issues of non-compliance have been corrected. The administration and teaching staff are commended for conducting a sustained effort during the past five years to attain a satisfactory level of compliance. Action taken includes revised forms, specific procedural instructions to staff, and questions regarding certification were resolved. Building on the good work of previous staff, the current superintendent of schools and his special education administrative team have attained the work originally identified in 1995. Congratulations.

III. ISSUES OF SIGNIFICANCE:

The on-site team commends the entire staff of SAU 46 for their diligence and commitment to meet the special needs of many different children. No systemic issues of significance or pervasive problems were identified during the visit. There is a continuum of services for the implementation of individual education programs. The team encountered positive attitudes throughout the supervisory union from administrators and teachers regarding their intent that every student succeed in school. The continuing effort to improve curriculum and the skills of teachers is particularly noteworthy. Quality curriculum and skillful teachers were observed in each school. The result of a focused effort at improving achievement and positive student development was evident in classrooms and schools. The approval by the voters of a major building program is a tribute to the commitment of school board to provide educational opportunities for students well into the future. SAU 46 is concentrating on what is important for students to know and be able to do. It is putting resources toward improving educational success for students and is commended for commitment to this vision. The citations in the following report are due mainly to procedural oversight. The goal of being in compliance with the many requirements for special education is a continuing effort and calls for everyone's perseverance. SAU 46 is encouraged to stay the course.

The preschool program continues to offer special education programming without a certified special educator on staff or in direct, regular consultation. The program is self-contained with students having very limited inclusionary

experiences with non-disabled peers. Both of these issues must be resolved in order for children to participate in a free appropriate public education (FAPE).

BOSCAWEN PRE-SCHOOL

PROGRAM(S) VISITED: 1) Preschool Program

NUMBER OF FILES REVIEWED: 1 File

COMMENDATIONS:

- Services delivered in the classroom allows for support of all students and identification of additional areas of need not outlined in IEPs.
- There is a good student to staff ratio.
- Excellent team approach to serving children through coordination of classroom topics and individual therapy.
- The school atmosphere is secure and friendly.
- The files were well organized and complete.
- Some services are delivered to children placed at daycare programs if needed to meet the child/family's needs.

CITATIONS: (in numerical order)

Ed .1109.01(g) 1 file: Location of services not provided as stated on IEP.

SUGGESTIONS:

- Additional storage space for storage of materials could be considered.
- Continue providing cohesive preschool services for special education students with typical peer models.

ANDOVER ELEMENTARY/MIDDLE SCHOOL

PROGRAM(S) VISITED: 1) Resource Room 2) Special Needs 3) Modified Regular

NUMBER OF FILES REVIEWED: 3 Files

COMMENDATIONS:

- There is a high level of collaboration between regular and special education staff.
- Regular education staff are enthusiastic about including special education students and making modifications and adaptations.
- School administration is supportive and provide for complete participation of special education students in all school activities.
- Parents of special education students were very pleased with the services provided to children.
- Student records were well organized.
- All teachers have received training in "Research for Better Teaching" which has raised the quality of instruction.
- The desire to involve special education students in team sports resulted in the development of a system that allows for participation based on effort rather than grades. Also included is a mandatory after school study hall, run by volunteer teachers, for regular and special education students on the teams.
- Th Eagle Café run by 6th, 7th and 8th grade students for senior citizens is a great learning experience. Twice a month the students plan breakfast menus, purchase goods, prepare and serve the meals for senior citizens in the community.

CITATIONS: (in numerical order)

NONE

SUGGESTIONS:

- The SAU should share the success of the Eagle Café by publishing the program description and its educational benefits.

BELMONT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

PROGRAM(S) VISITED: 1) Resource Room 2) Special Needs 3) Modified Regular

NUMBER OF FILES REVIEWED: 1 File

COMMENDATIONS:

- The school staff are very knowledgeable about how to integrate curriculum and instruction.
- There is good rapport among the staff and teachers who collaborate on a frequent, if informal, basis.
- Art and music classes are fully integrated.
- Guidance counselors go into the classrooms to focus on social skills and teach conflict resolution with the whole class.
- The school provides professional development opportunities for paraprofessionals during the school day.

CITATIONS: (in numerical order)

NONE

SUGGESTIONS:

- Consider developing a schedule that will enable regular and special education teachers to have common planning time at least once a week.
- Provide additional opportunities for aides to receive child specific training.
- Examine the method(s) of assessing special education students' progress. This duty falls to the special education teacher because student goals and objectives were addressed in the resource room. A common planning time would allow classroom teachers to provide input regarding the educational progress of students with disabilities.

CANTERBURY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

PROGRAM(S) VISITED: 1) Resource Room 2) 4TH Grade Classroom

NUMBER OF FILES REVIEWED: 3 Files

COMMENDATIONS:

- Staff understand the needs of students and are open to different ideas to meet individual learning styles.
- The school climate is community based and involves parents and local citizens.
- Staff are supportive of outside and after school activities.
- Paraprofessionals are provided with staff development opportunities.

CITATIONS: (in numerical order)

Ed. 1107.05(k) 1 file: evaluation was conducted with 45 days and there was no signed extension in the file.

Ed. 1109.04 1 file: parents were sent IEP meeting notice less than 10 days prior to the meeting.

CFR 300.347(a)(4) 2 files: did not contain statement of explanation of the extent to which the student will not participate with non-disabled peers in the regular classroom.

SUGGESTIONS:

- Incorporate more planning time for teachers and paraprofessionals.
- Improve coordination of "itinerate services" (speech, OT, PT, vision, etc.) so there is an understanding of what each is doing and promote clear connections to the student's total school program.

BOSCAWEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

PROGRAM(S) VISITED: 1) Resource Room 2) FACT Elementary

NUMBER OF FILES REVIEWED: 2 Files

COMMENDATIONS:

- There is a very strong sense of team effort and high staff morale in the school.
- Students receive individual attention due to the low student to staff ratio.
- The students' individual needs are given consideration by staff.
- The school provides a warm "family" environment.
- School-wide activities include special education students.
- The Functional Academic Program is a plus for the school.
- The principal is aligning IEP goals with the NH Curriculum Frameworks.
- Parents are very pleased with services, speak highly of staff and feel involved in the education process.
- The special education teachers see the special educator coordinator as very accessible.

CITATIONS: (in numerical order)

Ed. 1123.04(a) 1 file: lacked record of disclosure.

Ed. 1123.14

CFR 300.347(a)(1)(ii) 1 file: IEP does not include how the disability affects involvement and progress in the general curriculum.

SUGGESTIONS:

- Increased time for regular and special educate teachers to collaboratively plan and evaluate student progress is needed.

LOUDON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

PROGRAM(S) VISITED: 1) Resource Room 2) O.T.

NUMBER OF FILES REVIEWED: 3 Files

COMMENDATIONS:

- The use of a checklist for communication in the front of each file helps staff track IEP services.
- The use of a mainstream teacher as a parent advocate in evaluation meetings is commended.
- Each quarter, progress is measured numerically as well as narratively. This provides a complete picture of student progress.
- Most of the school staff participate in the "Research for Better Teaching" initiatives.
- There is a high level of support provided to students by both regular and special education staff.
- The special education teachers feel that the special education coordinator is very accessible.
- The physical therapist provides physical education classes for students requiring adaptive programming.

CITATIONS: (in numerical order)

CFR 300.347(a)(5)(ii) 1 file: lacked statement of why student will not participate in statewide or district-wide assessments.

CFR 300.345(d)(1-3) 1 file: lacked evidence of documented attempts made to involve parents IEP the meeting.

Ed. 1129.05 1 file: student was not assigned a spedis number.

SUGGESTIONS:

- The school and programs would benefit from additional space and staff.
- Increased time for regular and special education teachers to collaboratively plan and evaluate student progress is needed.

SALISBURY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

PROGRAM(S) VISITED: 1)LD Program

NUMBER OF FILES REVIEWED: 3 Files

COMMENDATIONS:

- Services delivered in classroom provides support for all students.
- There is excellent cooperation between regular and special education teachers.
- District-wide training for teachers and principals benefits all staff.
- Staff appear to be aware of student needs and actively monitor the delivery of services.
- The principal is supportive of special education staff.
- The files were well organized and complete.

CITATIONS: (in numerical order)

Ed. 1107.02 2 files: date of referral was not on the referral form.

Ed. 1109.01(a) 3 files: while present level of performance was noted on all IEPs, statement of affect on classroom involvement and progress in the general curriculum was not clearly delineated.

Ed. 1109.01(g) 3 files: IEP did not indicate location of services.

Ed. 1129.05 1 file: student was not assigned a spedis number.

SUGGESTIONS:

- Investigate types of supports needed in order to education students at the Elementary School currently being sent to other district programs.
- Continue to develop in-service training relevant to special education staff and related service personnel.
- Increase software selection to support the needs of special education students
- Offer parent classes regarding special education topics.

WASHINGTON STREET SCHOOL

PROGRAM(S) VISITED: 1) Resource Room

NUMBER OF FILES REVIEWED: 3 Files

COMMENDATIONS:

- There is good communication among staff members and a positive atmosphere in the school.
- Students benefit from the low student to regular education teacher ratio.
- The "L and A Program" promotes inclusion of all students.
- Parents are very pleased with student progress and services.
- There is an adequate number of paraprofessionals.
- The principal's leadership has resulted in concentrated instruction in language arts, math, problem solving skills and citizenship. High NHEAIP scores support the wisdom of a focused instructional program.
- All curricula are reviewed on a regular seven-year cycle resulting in up-to-date outcome based instructional programs for all students.
- The use of two commercially produced programs (Math for Everyday Learning and Scholastic Language Program) are receiving very positive comments and support from teachers.
- All teachers have received training in "Research for Better Teaching" resulting in significant improvements in the quality of instruction.

CITATIONS: (in numerical order)

Ed. 1119.06(d) Facilities for instruction included hallways. A new school projected for 2002 will alleviate this deficiency.

CFR 300.347(a)(7)(i) & (ii) 2 files: lacked statement of how progress will be measured and how parents will be informed of progress.

CFR 300.347(ii) 2 files: lacked evidence of progress that shows the extent to which it is sufficient to achieve the goals by the end of the year.

SUGGESTIONS:

NONE

WEBSTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

PROGRAM(S) VISITED: 1) LD Classroom

NUMBER OF FILES REVIEWED: 2 Files

COMMENDATIONS:

- There is good communication among staff members and a positive atmosphere in the school.
- Students receive individual attention due to the low student to staff ratio.

CITATIONS: (in numerical order)

Ed. 1109.04 1 file: record of parent contact was not maintained.

Ed. 1109.04 1 file: lacked evidence of district providing 10-day notice of meeting to parent.

Ed. 129.05 2 files: students were not assigned a spedis number.

SUGGESTIONS:

- Improve the process of obtaining SPEDIS numbers from the New Hampshire Department of Education.
- Revise "how the disability affects involvement and progress in general curriculum" statement for the IEP template.

BELMONT MIDDLE SCHOOL

PROGRAM(S) VISITED: 1) Grade 6 Classroom 2) Grade 8 Classroom

NUMBER OF FILES REVIEWED: 3 Files

COMMENDATIONS:

- Staff are dedicated and child centered.
- Administrators are "hands on" and very aware of the developmental stages of the students.
- Student records are organized and well maintained.
- Providing student advisory in the beginning of the school day is beneficial.
- All paraprofessionals are allowed release time to obtain training.
- The assistant principal is very involved with the students.
- The guidance counselor is initiating many great programs at all levels.
- The principal is leading the school from the junior high model to a middle school philosophy and is supportive of advisory teaming, team planning and inclusion.
- The school looks at student needs and programming in a creative manner.
- The special education director is coordinating programs and services very effectively and has a good knowledge of individual students, schools and programs.

CITATIONS: (in numerical order)

CFR 300.347(a)(i) 1 file: criteria for measurement not on IEP.

Ed.1109.01(b)(I) 1 file: Goals are not measurable.

Ed. 1123.04(a)(7) Procedural safeguards should be taken to lock special education records.

Ed. 1109.03 1 file: lacked evidence that regular education teacher attended meeting.

SUGGESTIONS:

- The math program was homogeneously grouped. The class contained 10 special needs students. Data needs to be collected regarding the impact this type of grouping is having on improved student performance.
- Consider providing more staff development for regular education teachers in making modifications in the classroom.

MERRIMACK VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL

PROGRAM(S) VISITED: 1) FACT 2) Learning & Adjustment

NUMBER OF FILES REVIEWED: 3 Files

COMMENDATIONS:

- Student records were well organized.
- The school has an upbeat, positive atmosphere.
- Some regular education teachers have a special education background.
- The school provides an excellent occupational therapy cooking program for students.
- Regular education teachers are confident that special education will provide backup for behavioral issues.
- The PE rock climbing is accessed by a student with a visual impairment.

CITATIONS: (in numerical order)

Ed. 1109.01(a) 1 file: the present level of performance was too general.

Ed. 1109.01(b) 1 file: lacked statement of how disability affects performance in the general curriculum.

CFR 300.346(a)(1)(iii) 2 files: NHEIAP scores were not considered as part of the evaluation.

CFR 300.344(a)(2) 1 file: lacked evidence of regular education teacher as part of the team.

Ed. 1123.04(a)(10) 2 files: record of disclosure not evident in file.

Ed. 1119.07(a) The teacher of the "L and A Program" is responsible for students who have behavioral issues. His current certification is in general special education, which does not provide depth of knowledge, skill and competency for working with EH students.

SUGGESTIONS:

- Ensure that team members identify themselves and their role on all meeting notes.
- Consider including dividers in student records/binders to separate dated paperwork.
- Keep copies of all current evaluations in student records/binders.

BELMONT HIGH SCHOOL

PROGRAM(S) VISITED: 1) Learning Center 2) Regular Education Classroom

NUMBER OF FILES REVIEWED: 3 Files

COMMENDATIONS:

- Student records were well organized and maintained.
- There is cooperation among all staff to provide an inclusionary education to students.
- The support staff are commended for their willingness to provide continuity of services and communication for the benefit of students, staff and parents.
- The school has a strong commitment for providing all staff with special education training.

CITATIONS: (in numerical order)

Ed. 1109.01(j) 1 file: IEP did not identify all service providers.

SUGGESTIONS:

- Make an intensive effort to hire skilled and competent aides.
- Continue with the highly successful collaborative effort to meet the needs of all students.
- Continue to support regular education teachers in becoming knowledgeable regarding special education student needs.

MERRIMACK VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

PROGRAM(S) VISITED: 1) EH PROGRAM 2) LD PROGRAM 3) MR PROGRAM

NUMBER OF FILES REVIEWED: 3 Files

COMMENDATIONS:

- School staff are very student centered and have a good understanding of the IEP process.
- The team approach and collaborative effort among staff is evident.
- Student files were organized and maintained.
- Special education students are full members of the school, including extra curricular activities.
- The administration offers strong support for special education.

CITATIONS: (in numerical order)

Ed. 1107.02(b) 1 file: Evidence of initial referral, written prior notice and evaluation reports kept in separate file.

SUGGESTIONS:

- Continue with the open communication between administration and teachers.
- The building should be examined for improvements.
- Consider remodeling the self-contained classroom.

OUT-OF-DISTRICT FILES

NUMBER OF FILES REVIEWED: 2 files

COMMENDATIONS:

- The Director of Pupil Personnel Services and Assistant Director serve as case managers for students placed out-of-district. Their involvement with each student's particular needs and IEP was thorough and evidenced frequent contact.

CITATIONS: (in numerical order)

CFR 300.307(b) 1 file: unable to determine if student was participating in a regular physical education program.

CFR 300.347(a)(7)(i) 1 file: progress did not indicate the extent to which it is sufficient to achieve the goals by the end of the year.

SUGGESTIONS:

NONE

ADDENDUM

JAMES O. MONITORING PROGRAM

SAU 46

Student File Review

Case Study Document

Reimbursement Claim Form

Case Study Addendum Form

<p style="text-align: center;">ADDENDUM JAMES O. MONITORING PROGRAM</p>

SAU 46

NUMBER OF FILES REVIEWED: 3 FILES

COMMENDATIONS:

The personal interest and attention provided James O' students by the Director of Pupil Personnel and the Assistant Director is outstanding as evidenced by regular and frequent communication with each facility. The Director of Pupil Personnel and the Assistant Director serve as competent and skilled case managers for James O' students.

CITATIONS: (in numerical order)

Ed. 1107.05(k) 1 file: unable to locate evidence that the evaluation was completed within 45 days.

Ed. 1109.01(k) 2 files: the facilities IEP's did not include provision for identifying financial responsibility.

CFR 300.307 3 files: lacked evidence of participation in regular physical education.

SUGGESTIONS:

- It is suggested that SAU# 46 consider using the district's IEP for all or part of the placement description for James O' students. The facilities omissions will be conveyed to the New Hampshire Department of Education.
- It is recommended that a simplified system be instituted at the SAU level for maintaining James O' student records.